

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE UPDATE

APRIL 18, 2002

The University of Nebraska Lincoln has announced that the Veterinary Sciences Lab at Scotts Bluff will close as of July 1, 2002. This is due to a decrease in the University budget. This lab is crucial to our continued testing of wild animals for CWD and the loss of this resource will be costly in added staff and travel time to the lab at North Platte. Additionally, the lab at North Platte is smaller and we will not be able to handle test animals as rapidly as we were at Scotts Bluff.

The Wisconsin legislature is working with Wisconsin DNR and Wisconsin Department of Animal Health in an effort to ban the feeding and baiting of cervids in that state. The legislature is also working on increasing the budget of the DNR to assist in fighting CWD.

Approximately 90% of the captive elk breeders in the Colorado endemic area have agreed to a buy-out program that will result in an additional 1,000 elk in that area being depopulated. The producers have agreed not to bring in any other cervids to their facilities. The goal is to make the Colorado endemic area captive cervid free.

Previous depopulations in Colorado resulted in approximately 1,561 elk being depopulated and 32 tested positive for CWD at three different facilities. The McConnell facilities at Stoneham had the highest positive results with 29 animals testing positive.

The Wildlife Management Institute, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and The Wildlife Society are working on an action alert to send to all state wildlife agencies reference the potential for CWD to spread and calling for all states to institute monitoring of captive and wild cervids for CWD.

The Canadian Cervid Council called an emergency meeting of all interested parties in Banff, Alberta, Canada for Monday, April 15 to address CWD issues in North American. Due to the short time frame of notification of this meeting, most states in the United States did not have representation at this meeting.

The Governor of Colorado has sent letters to eight western state governors calling for a regional task force to address CWD issues. This could become an expansion of the regional task force formed by Nebraska two years ago.

Although they have not found CWD in their state yet, Minnesota officials are working on a ban on feeding and baiting and a moratorium on wild and captive cervid imports.

Colorado Division of Wildlife employees are continuing the depopulation of wild cervids around the Motherwell Ranch in Routt County, Colorado. Their goal is to kill all wild cervids within 5 miles of the ranch prior to spring migration of deer and elk in that area.

The total count of wild deer testing positive for CWD in Nebraska is now up to 14, 1 in Cheyenne County, 1 in Scotts Bluff County, 3 in Kimball County and 9 in Sioux County. Samples have been collected along the Sioux County/Wyoming border and we are waiting on results.

The state of New York has banned the import of all cervids into that state. The currently have approximately 500 captive cervid facilities that will be affected by this ban.

The Agriculture Research Service of the USDA is continuing to work with Mr. Edwards on a lease of his property for transmission research. They have stated that NGPC will play a pivotal role in determining what research will be conducted and developing research protocol for the facility. Dr. Mace Hack of the Commission's Wildlife Division has been named the main contact for ARS and NGPC.

The Governor of Colorado has requested that the Colorado Legislature provide authorization for the Colorado Division of Wildlife to spend an additional 1.9 million dollars on the effort to control CWD in that state.

The states of Connecticut and Indiana have banned the import of deer and elk into their state.